

GLOBAL INTEGRATION—INTEREST GROUP

- Conveners: Gemma Tulud Cruz, Australian Catholic University
Mark T. Miller, University of San Francisco
- Moderator: Elaine Padilla, New York Theological Seminary
- Presenters: Gerard Mannion, Georgetown University
Anselm Min, Claremont Graduate University
Stephen Bevans, S.V.D., Catholic Theological Union

This year's session considered the global challenges of pluralism, theological education, and capitalism. The session had three panel presenters. The first presenter, Gerard Mannion, explored the social ethics and public theology of Pope Francis, with particular attention to the plight of contemporary workers amidst the "globalization of indifference" in a presentation titled "An Ever-Deepening Alienation: 21st Century Capitalism and the End of Work." Mannion began by critically discussing progressive states of alienation in our time, particularly in relation to work, and how capitalism is a source or cause of such states of alienation. Mannion then explored Pope Francis' notion of an "integrated ecology," his call for a global dialogue toward a new politics, working in tandem with morally driven economic thinking and practice, and the need to foster "civic and political love" as a response to the alienation. Mannion also discussed the criticisms leveled against Francis by his key critics and concluded his presentation with an affirmation for the vision that "a better world is possible."

Second, Anselm Min's presentation, "The Challenges of Global Pluralism and Christian Responses," looked at the four compelling ways Christianity should respond to the nihilism and reduction of human subjectivity associated with the injustices as well as the "festival of diversity and pluralism" brought by globalization. The four responses include: (1) renewing Christianity's counter-cultural function as a radical critique of life, especially capitalist nihilism; (2) promoting politics as the most effective way of practicing love; (3) cultivating the spirituality of the civic virtue and; (4) mobilizing Christianity's spiritual resources for global solidarity. Min highlighted the counter-cultural role of theology and emphasized the need for a political theology that is effective and prudent. Min discussed, as an example of a theological task, the retrieval and deepening of the Christology of recapitulation as a concrete symbol of solidarity by reflecting on recapitulation from the lens of a cosmic and cosmopolitan "politics of solidarity in the hope of liberation."

Finally, Stephen Bevans' presentation, "Becoming a Global Theologian: A Personal Journey," sketched in broad strokes Bevans' own journey in teaching and doing theology from a global perspective, and offered ways that others might profit from thinking theologically in dialogue with the world's cultures, with the world's religions, with other expressions of Christianity, and with the world's art. Bevans reflected on key moments and key people in his journey that took him to various countries as well as led to various high profile roles and notable publications. At the heart of Bevans' presentation is the growing realization of the global and missionary nature of the Church and, consequently, his own task and vocation as a theologian, which led him to claim contextual theology and missiology as his theological home.

Interest Group: Global Integration

The presentations were followed by a vigorous discussion on several issues touched upon by the presenters. These include (1) importance of “rootedness in the local” when it comes to responding to globalization; (2) the role of the Holy Spirit as an agent in the humanization of globalization; (3) mission as cooperation with God in the completion of God’s creation and; (4) the practical dimension of theology in the face of the unjust and alienating processes and forces of globalization. The session ended with a conversation on the need for a theology that makes a difference by integrating conscientization as one of the aims in doing theology.

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